



Saving America's Cities Working Group

Our nation's cities are facing a crisis. America's cities are becoming ever poorer. Buildings and infrastructure are aging. Populations and revenues are declining. Budgets are out of balance, while the costs of basic services are increasing, forcing cuts in services, including police and fire protection. Homeland security costs are rising. Financial problems in cities threaten the nation's economic recovery.

And yet, cities are the core of our nation's economic growth and hubs of business and economic activity. They generate 80% of the nation's employment, income and production of goods and services. According to a US Conference of Mayors study the gross product of the 10 largest US metro areas exceeds the combined output of 31 states, and sixteen metro areas account for more than half of the output in the state in which they are located.

Five core principles:

- *Cities should be vibrant cultural, economic, tourist and social centers*
Cities hold our culture and our history. Cities are a vacation destination and attract patrons to plays, concerts, sporting events and other entertainment. Cities are the front door of our culture and should be vibrant and exciting places to experience.
- *Cities should be advanced health care and education centers*
Cities are found at the intersection of transportation routes and are the best location for regional services. Often major centers of learning and research are located in metro regions. Therefore, cities are the natural spots for regional health care facilities and education hubs, and the vibrancies of our cities impacts the strength of these centers.
- *Cities should be clean, attractive and safe*
Urban residents and visitors are entitled to cities that are safe and appealing. Cities must have the economic resources and tax base to be secure and well kept.
- *Cities should have diverse economic and cultural populations*
Recent studies have indicated that many are attracted to city living because of the diversity of experience and population that can be found in them. Cities must take care to protect diversity of income and culture, and should have housing opportunities that support diverse economic communities.
- *The health of cities are vital to the wellbeing of suburbs and surrounding regions*
Cities are connected to the suburbs by transportation networks, jobs, culture, media markets and services. The wellbeing of suburbs is inexorably tied to the wellbeing of the urban core.

The Saving America's Cities initiative provides us with an opportunity to improve the condition of our cities and respond to urban residents, especially minority residents, by addressing urban issues of economic development, urban redevelopment, and making government work.

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